

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16622

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM UR US SO
SUBJECT: EFFECT OF SOMALI ACTION ON U.S.-SOVIET INDIAN
OCEAN TALKS

SUMMARY: THE SOMALI EXPULSION OF THE SOVIET MILITARY WILL
EFFECTIVELY CLOSE BERBERA TO THE SOVIETS AS A RELIABLE BASE
BUT PROBABLY WILL NOT DRAMATICALLY CHANGE SOVIET NEGOTIATING
POSITION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. END SUMMARY

1. THE SOMALI RENUNCIATION OF THE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP
TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EXPULSION OF ALL NON-
DIPLOMATIC MILITARY PERSONNEL WOULD SEEM TO EFFECTIVELY
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CLOSE DOWN THE SOVIET FACILITY AT BERBERA. IT WILL ALSO
SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT SOVIET USE OF ALL SOMALI PORTS
FOR ITS WARSHIPS, PROBABLY ELIMINATING SUCH USE ALTO-
GETHER IN THE SHORT TERM. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION
OF WHAT IMMEDIATE IMPACT THE SOMALI MOVE WILL HAVE ON
THE ONGOING BILATERAL U.S.-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS FOR
LIMITING MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE EMBASSY'S INITIAL THOUGHTS ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. WE THINK THAT THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SOMALI MOVE WILL DRAMATICALLY AFFECT THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE THE SOVIETS PROBABLY HAVE ALREADY DISCOUNTED IN LARGE MEASURE THE BERBERA FACILITY IN MAKING THEIR CALCULATIONS ON AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN TALKS. AN INDICATION OF THIS WAS THEIR ATTEMPT IN THE THIRD ROUND OF THE TALKS IN SEPTEMBER TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE U.S. PROPOSAL A "BASKET APPROACH" BY WHICH EACH SIDE WOULD BE FREE TO MAKE USE OF ANY PORT FACILITIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AS LONG AS THE TOTAL USE DID NOT EXCEED THE PRESENT LEVEL OF PORT USAGE. THIS APPEARS TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO LEAVE OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF USING FACILITIES OTHER THAN BERBERA SHOULD THEY BE EVICTED. IT WOULD BE UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THE SOVIETS TO HAVE ENTERED THE NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CURRENT UNSETTLED NATURE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA MIGHT RESULT IN THE TERMINATION OF THEIR USE OF THE BERBERA BASE.

3. THE FACT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE CONSISTENTLY DENIED THAT THEY HAVE A BASE AT BERBERA OR THAT THEY DERIVE ANY SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE FROM THE FACILITY

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AT BERBERA WILL TEND TO UNDERCUT ANY ATTEMPT AT THIS POINT EITHER TO DELAY THE NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF THE USE OF BERBERA OR TO TRY TO GAIN AN ADVANTAGE FROM THAT LOSS. RATHER WE SEE TWO POSSIBLE LINES FOR THEM TO TAKE IN THE COMING ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS IN BERN.

4. THE FIRST AND MORE PROBABLE IS THAT THEY WILL BE EVEN MORE ADAMANT IN THEIR INSISTENCE THAT THERE BE NO CONTINUATION OF U.S. CONSTRUCTION ON DIEGO GARCIA FOLLOWING A STABILIZATION AGREEMENT AND THEY WILL BE EVEN MORE INSISTENT THAT THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE NEGOTIATIONS IS THE REDUCTION AND ELIMINATION OF U.S. BASES, ESPECIALLY DIEGO, IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THEY WILL ALSO, WE BELIEVE, BECOME MORE ADAMANT THAT ANY ARRANGEMENT PERMITTING THE USE OF PORT FACILITIES IN THE AREA INCLUDE THE FLEXIBILITY TO TRANSFER PORT OPERATIONS WITHIN THE AREA FROM ONE PORT FACILITY TO ANOTHER PROVIDED THE TOTAL USAGE DOES NOT EXCEED THE CURRENT LEVEL OF SUCH ACTIVITY (I.E., "BASKET APPROACH").

5. THE SECOND POSSIBILITY WHICH WE THINK IS LESS

LIKELY IS ONE WHERE, AFTER FAILING TO GET THE U.S. TO AGREE TO HALT ALL CONSTRUCTION AT DIEGO GARCIA, THEY WOULD FALL BACK TO A POSITION THAT ANY "FACILITY" USED BY EITHER SIDE COULD BE CONTINUED TO BE UTILIZED IN THE FUTURE CONSISTENT WITH A COMMITMENT THAT THECURRENT LEVELAND PATTERN OF ACTIVITY OF NAVAL AND AIR UNITS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA NOT BE EXCEEDED. THIS WOULD HAVE THE AFFECT OF LIMITING THE "STABILIZATION" AGREEMENT TO SEA AND AIR UNITS AND ACTIVITIES AND EXCLUDING SHORE FACILITIES WHICH SUPPORT THOSE ACTIVITIES.

6. THE ADVANTAGE TO THE SOVIETS IN TAKING THIS APPROACH WOULD BE THAT IT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO CHANGE
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THE LEVEL AND PATTERN OF THEIR CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN OTHER SHORE FACILITIES IN THE REGION (SUCH AS ADEN, MOZAMBIQUE OR GAN ISLAND IF ACCESS CAN BE ARRANGED WITHOUT CONTRAVENING THE AGREEMENT. THEY WOULD THUS BE FREE TO REPLACE BERBERA WITH A FACILITY IN ADEN OR IN SOME OTHER PORT SO THAT THEIR OVERALL SHORE SUPPORT FACILITIES WOULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED.

7. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, THE SECOND POSSIBILITY IS PROBABLY NOT ATTRACTIVE TO THE SOVIETS BECAUSE IT FOREGOES CONTROLS ON DEVELOPMENT OF DIEGO AND OTHER U.S.-USED FACILITIES AND LEAVES THE SOVIETS OPEN TO CHARGES BY LITTORAL STATES THAT THEY ARE ESTABLISHING NEW BASES BY REPLACING BERBERA. BASICALLY THE SOVIETS WOULD FIND A NET ADVANTAGE IN LIMITING, REDUCING AND ELIMINATING U.S. BASING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE AREA AND WOULD PREFER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL RATHER THAN TRY AND REPLACE BERBARA WITH ANOTHER FACILITY WHICH WOULD ALSO BE SUBJECT TO UNILATERAL CLOSING BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT.

8. HENCE, WE THINK THAT AT LEAST INITIALLY THE SOVIETS WILL NOT MAKE ANY DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THEIR CURRENT NEGOTIATING POSTURE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN TALKS BUT RATHER THEY WILL STICK TO THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS BUT BE LESS LIKELY TO ACCEPT COMPROMISES WHICH WOULD ALLOW U.S. FACILITIES TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. TOON

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